

CITY OF SOMERVILLE
ORDINANCE ARTICLE VII – COMPLETE STREETS ORDINANCE
OF CHAPTER 12
IN THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN:

WHEREAS, Complete Streets are designed and implemented to assure safety and accessibility for all the users of our streets, paths and transit systems, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, commercial vehicles, emergency vehicles and for people of all ages and of all abilities; and

WHEREAS, the SomerVision Comprehensive plan prescribes the development of a street network that is conducive to safe and pleasant use by all users and part of a multi-modal sustainable transportation network; and;

WHEREAS, the SomerVision Comprehensive plan recommends the adoption of a Complete Streets ordinance;

WHEREAS, Complete Streets prioritizes walkability, bikability, inter-modal transit, traffic calming and pedestrian-based urban economic development over competing goals, consistent with Somerville's form as the densest city in New England, and complementing planned rapid transit expansion that will bring a station to within ½ mile of 85% of Somerville's population; and

WHEREAS, The Massachusetts Project Development & Design Guide (2006) states that traffic calming measures are physical elements intended to reduce vehicle speeds and improve driver attentiveness and are most often applied to existing streets where vehicle operating speeds are in conflict with or incompatible with pedestrian and bicycle activity; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets support economic growth and community stability by providing accessible and efficient connections between home, school, work, recreation and retail destinations by improving the pedestrian and vehicular environments throughout communities; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets were cited by the League of American Bicyclists, upon designating Somerville a "Bicycle-Friendly Community" in 2011, as the most important improvement the City can undertake to improve conditions for active transportation; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets enhance safe walking and bicycling options for school-age children, in recognition of the objectives of the national Safe Routes to School program and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's "Physical Activity Guidelines"; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets will help the City of Somerville to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and its 77% impervious area fraction (largely due to surface parking) as more residents choose an alternative to the single occupant vehicle, thereby improving air quality, alleviating public health concerns such as asthma, and making possible more green space and flood control by decreasing demand for parking lots; and

WHEREAS, A Complete Streets ordinance for Somerville will integrate Complete Streets planning into all types of projects, including new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, repair, and maintenance during the construction, reconstruction or other changes of transportation facilities on streets and redevelopment projects;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it ordained by the Board of Aldermen, in session assembled, that the Code of Ordinances of the City of Somerville is hereby amended as follows:

The addition of Article VII, Complete Street Ordinance to Chapter 12 of the Code of Ordinances as follows:

- (1) The City of Somerville shall enhance the safety, access, convenience and comfort of all users of all ages and abilities, providing for equality in use between pedestrians (including people requiring mobility aids), bicyclists, transit users, motorists and freight drivers, through the design, operation and maintenance of the transportation network so as to create a connected network of facilities accommodating each mode of travel that is consistent with and supportive of the local community, recognizing that all streets are different and that the needs of various users will need to be balanced in a flexible manner to achieve Complete Streets.
- (2) The City of Somerville will incorporate Complete Street elements into public transportation projects in order to provide appropriate accommodation for bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users and persons of all abilities, while promoting safe operation for all users, in comprehensive and connected networks in a manner consistent with, and supportive of, the surrounding community.
- (3) As feasible, City of Somerville shall incorporate Complete Streets Infrastructure into existing streets to improve the safety and convenience of users, construct and enhance the transportation network for each category of users, and foster economic development and new employment.
- (4) The City of Somerville recognizes that Complete Streets may be achieved through single elements incorporated into a particular project or incrementally through a series of smaller improvements or maintenance activities over time.
- (5) The City of Somerville shall approach every transportation project and program as an opportunity to improve streets and the transportation network for all users, including conducting, once per year, a “rules of the road” education campaign to better inform cyclists of city/state traffic regulations. This work shall be done by the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, with approval from Communications, Traffic and Parking, DPW, and in cooperation with other departments, agencies, jurisdictions and associations.
- (6) City of Somerville shall follow The Massachusetts Project Development & Design Guide (2006), the National Association of City Transportation Officials Urban Bikeway Design Guide, the ITE Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach, An ITE Recommended Practice report guidelines, and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) green book, which provide guidance on basic design controls and achievement of Complete Streets. At a minimum, the following shall be followed:
 - A. In developed areas, continuous sidewalks should be provided on both sides of a roadway, minimizing the number of pedestrian crossings required. [If sidewalks are only on one side], the sidewalk should be provided on the side that minimizes the number of pedestrian crossings.
 - B. Pedestrian requirements must be fully considered in the design of intersections [including taking into consideration the following concerns:] crossings and pedestrian curb cut ramp locations; minimizing curb radius at corners; walking speed, pedestrian flow capacity, traffic control, yielding and delays.
 - C. All new and reconstructed sidewalks must be accessible to and usable by person with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board.

- D. Dedicated bicycle facilities, including conventional and physically separated bike lanes or cycle tracks, must be fully considered and implemented in the design of streets and intersections wherever possible.
- E. Along roadway segments, greater separation of motor vehicle and non-motorized users should be provided by implementing cycle tracks, buffered or conventional bicycle lanes, bicycle boxes, shoulders, or buffered sidewalks.
- F. Where motorized and non-motorized users cannot be separated, traffic calming should be prioritized to implement a low-speed shared street [not to exceed 30 mph prima facie or posted speed] compatible with bicycle and pedestrian speeds on non-federal aid eligible roads.

(7) Bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities shall be incorporated, when applicable and practical, in all street projects, re-construction, re-paving, and re-habilitation projects, with only the following exceptions:

- Bicycles or pedestrians are prohibited by law from using the facility.
- The cost of establishing bikeways or walkways as part of the project would be disproportionate in cost or to anticipated future use (not the current use).
- The existing right of way is constrained in a manner that inhibits simple addition of transit, bicycle, or pedestrian improvements. In this case, the City shall consider alternatives such as lane reduction, lane narrowing, on-street parking relocation or reduction, shoulders, signage, traffic calming, or enforcement.
- Where such facilities would constitute a threat to public safety or health in the determination of the City Traffic Engineer in consultation with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure.

(8) All initial planning and design studies, health impact assessments, environmental reviews, and other project reviews for projects requiring funding or approval by City of Somerville shall make effort to (1) evaluate the effect of the proposed project on safe travel by all users, and (2) identify measures to mitigate any adverse impacts on such travel that are identified.

(9) In design guidelines, City of Somerville shall coordinate templates with street classifications and revise them to include Complete Streets Infrastructure, such as bicycle lanes and cycle tracks, sidewalks, street crossings, curb geometries, and planting strips. The design of new or reconstructed facilities should anticipate and support likely future demand for bicycling, walking and transit facilities.